HAGERSTOWN LANDMARKS RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties # WA-HAG-179

Property Name/Address: Moller Organ Works, 403 North Prospect St., Hagerstown, Maryland

Description/Significance: An excellent example of the industrial architecture of Hagerstown representing the city's economic boom period of the late 19th century. It is located in an elevated setting on the western edge of the Hagerstown Historic District; the extensive group of large manufacturing and office structures is highly visible from numerous vantage points within the city. The present complex is the result of multiple building campaigns spanning the period 1895-1926. The complex comprises five principal contributing resources; in addition, a variety of subsidiary structures are located on the property. The buildings are constructed of brick, and range in height from two to three stories; a variety of roof forms are represented, including gabled (with clerestory), hipped, and shed. The focus of the complex is a crenellated threestory erecting shop, constructed ca. 1920. This section fronts on North Prospect Street at the head of West North Street and is dominated by a large arched window more than two stories high. A three-story, 30-bay-wide factory building dating from the first decade of the 20th century projects to the south of the erecting shop. Twostory wings housing offices and a machine shop, constructed in the 1920s, adjoin the erecting shop to the north. Another large factory building, representing the earliest structure in the complex, constructed in 1895, is located at the rear, fronting on a railroad siding.

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

I. Geographic Organization: Western Maryland

II. Chronological/Developmental Period(s):

Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870-1930

III. Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s):

Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Community Planning

IV. Resource Type

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Urban Historic Function(s) and Use(s):

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/manufacturing facility

Known Design Source: Unknown

Form Prepared by:

Peter E. Kurtze 109 Brandon Road

Baltimore, Maryland 21212

June 30, 1992

HAGERSTOWN LANDMARKS RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties # WA-HAG-179

Property Name/Address: Moller Organs Building, 403 North Prospect St., Hagerstown, Maryland

Description/Significance: An excellent example of the industrial architecture of Hagerstown representing the city's economic boom period of the late 19th century. It is located in an elevated setting on the western edge of the Hagerstown Historic District and commands a view of much of the city. The present complex is the result of a complex sequence of construction, beginning in 1880. The principal structure fronting on North Prospect Street consists of a crenellated main section, four stories high, with wings projecting from the south and north. The main section is dominated by a large arched window, more than two stories high. The south wing is three stories high and totals 30 bays wide; the southernmost ten bays represent an addition. The north wing is two stories high, and comprises five recessed panels of two bays each. A two story building with a hipped roof is located behind the north section. The detailing of the brickwork suggests that the north wing, and the southernmost ten bays of the south wing, are contemporaneous with each other.

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

I. Geographic Organization: Western Maryland

II. Chronological/Developmental Period(s):

Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870-1930

III. Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s):

Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Community Planning

IV. Resource Type

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Urban Historic Function(s) and Use(s):

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/manufacturing facility

Known Design Source: Unknown

Form Prepared by:

Peter E. Kurtze 109 Brandon Road

Baltimore, Maryland 21212

August 15, 1991

Survey No. W.-HAG-179 Magi No.

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

DOE __yes __no

1. Nam	e (indicate pre	eferred name)		
historic Molle	er Organ Works			
and/or common	M. P. Moller,	Inc.		
2. Loca	ation			
street & number	403 North Pros	pect Street	n	/a not for publication
city, town Hag	gerstown	vicinity of	congressional district	
state Maryl	and	county	Washington	
3. Clas	sification			
Category districtX building(s) structure site object	Ownership public _X_ private both Public Acquisition in process being considered _X_ not_applicable	Status _X_ occupied unoccupied work in progress Accessible _X_ yes: restricted yes: unrestricted no	Present Use agriculture commercial educational entertainment government industrial military	museum park private residence religious scientific transportation other:
4. Own	er of Prope	rty (give names a	nd mailing address	es of <u>all</u> owners)
name				
street & number			telephone	no.:
city, town		state	and zip code	
5. Loca	ation of Leg	al Descripti	on	
courthouse, regi	stry of deeds, etc. Was	hington County C	ourthouse	liber
street & number 95 West Washington Street			folio	
city, town Hagerstown		state	Maryland	
6. Rep	resentation	in Existing	Historical Sur	veys
title n/a				
date			federal st	ate county loca
pository for su	urvey records			
city, town			state	

7. Description

Survey No. WA-HAG-179

excellent deteriorated unaltered X original site good ruins altered moved date of move fair unexposed	$\underline{\mathbf{x}}$ good	ruins				
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Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE COUNT: 5

The Möller Organ Works is located in an elevated setting on the western edge of the Hagerstown Historic District; the extensive group of large manufacturing and office structures is highly visible from numerous vantage points within the city. The present complex is the result of multiple building campaigns spanning the period 1895-1926. The complex comprises five principal contributing resources; in addition, a variety of subsidiary structures are located on the property. The buildings are constructed of brick, and range in height from two to three stories; a variety of roof forms are represented, including gabled (with clerestory), hipped, and shed.

The focus of the complex is a crenellated three-story erecting shop, constructed ca. 1920. This section fronts on North Prospect Street at the head of West North Street and is dominated by a large arched window more than two stories high. A three-story, 30-bay-wide factory building dating from the first decade of the 20th century projects to the south of the erecting shop. Two-story wings housing offices and a machine shop, constructed in the 1920s, adjoin the erecting shop to the north. Another large factory building, representing the earliest structure in the complex, constructed in 1895, is located at the rear, fronting on a railroad siding.

Additional descriptive information and analysis of the sequence of construction of the various elements in the complex is provided in Section 8.

8.	Significance
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Survey No. WA-HAG-179

Period prehi 1400 1500 1600 1700 1800 1900	-1499 -1599 -1699 -1799 -1899	Areas of Significance—Cl — archeology-prehistoric — archeology-historic — agriculture — architecture — art — commerce — communications	• •	literature military music philosophy politics/government	religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Specific	dates	1895-ca. 1925	Builder/Architect unk	nown	
check:	an App1:	icable Criteria: <u>x</u> A nd/or icable Exception:A l of Significance:	BCD1		

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Möller Organ Works is significant under criterion A, for its association with the industrial development of Hagerstown, and under criterion C, as an example of a type of industrial facility developed and expanded during the late 19th and early 20th centuries for the manufacture of pipe organs. By the early 20th century, the M. P. Möller company attained the status of the largest pipe organ manufacturer in the world, and was also among the largest employers in Hagerstown.

Mathias Peter Möller (1854-1937) was born on the island of Bjornholm, Denmark, September 29, 1854. He apprenticed to a mechanic at age 14, and emigrated to America in 1872. He began working in the factory of the Derrick Felgemaker Organ Company in Erie, Pennsylvania. The experience he gained in pipe organ design and construction enabled him to conceive an improved type of wind chest, and in 1875 he went into business for himself, using capital he had borrowed from his brother, a grocer in Greencastle, Pennsylvania. Möller converted a barn for the manufacture of pipe organs; the first organ produced in this factory was installed in the Swedish Lutheran Church in Warren, Pennsylvania. An early Möller organ was exhibited at the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia in 1876. In 1881, Governor William T. Hamilton and Senator Lewis E. McComas were instrumental in persuading Möller to relocate to Hagerstown, at the behest of a group of influential citizens who extended him an interest-free loan for a period of ten years.1

Möller initially established his business at 615 North Potomac Street, opposite Fairground Avenue. The firm was immediately successful. Historian J. Thomas Scharf, writing the year after Möller moved to Hagerstown, described the organ maker's innovations and accomplishments:

. . . These organs combine all the late improvements and new

Sea Notes, Section 8, Page 5

10. Geographi	cal Data		
Acreage of nominated property _ Quadrangle name Hagerston	<u>vn,</u> ™D		Quadrangle scale 1:24000
UTM References do NOT com	plete UTM refe	rences	
Zone Easting No	orthing	B Zone Ea	sting Northing
c	لبليا	D L⊥ L	
E		F	
G		H	
List all states and counties for	or properties over	lapping state or coun	ty boundaries
state	code	county	code
11. Form Prep	ared By		
		·	
name/title Peter E. Kurt	tze		
name/title Peter E. Kurtorganization	tze	date	June 30, 1992
maine/title		date	(440) 206 7570

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust

Shaw House 21 State Circle

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

(301) 269-2438

Section 8 Page 2

WA-HAG-179 Möller Organ Works

designs of cases, and are very elegant in finish. A novel construction of Mohler's [sic] choral pipe-organs, which is patented, is built with five sets of pipes with independent pedal base, that can be shipped to any distance without removing a single pipe, and ready for use. The reed-organs manufactured by Mr. Mohler are in very general use, and stand deservedly high, and are unsurpassed in sweetness and perfection. There is one of these pipe-organs in the German Reformed and one in the Lutheran churches, Greencastle; one in the Presbyterian church, Mercersburg; and in the First Reformed chapel, Hagerstown, and other places of worship.²

By 1887, the Möller firm was described as having "erected some very large organs in different cities, all of which have been very highly commended by competent judges." The 1892 Sanborn Map indicates the source of these instruments as a two-story ell-plan brick factory building in which sawing, bench work, finishing, and setting up were carried out; an addition to accommodate turning, woodworking, and painting was planned. A small, separate building functioned as a steam dry house. This plant was destroyed by fire, and the Möller Works moved to its present site on North Prospect Street in 1895.

This Potomac Street facility was modestly scaled in comparison to the company's subsequent establishment; Sanborn Maps prepared in 1897, 1904, 1910, 1918, and 1926 document the rapid expansion of the North Prospect Street plant during the first quarter of the twentieth century. The 1897 Sanborn map shows a three-story brick factory, rectangular in plan, measuring over 200 feet long by about 50 feet deep; this structure more than tripled the area of the previous plant. Assembling, erecting, cabinet work and finishing were carried out in this building, which was served by an elevator and had its own railroad siding. A dry house was located in the south end of the building, and a large lumber shed adjoined it. Additional lumber storage was provided to the west, across the railroad tracks.

By 1904, the complex had again effectively doubled in size, with a new two-story rectangular brick building constructed parallel to the 1895 factory on the east and linked to the earlier building by a large, one-story hyphen. The new facilities provided increased capacity for woodworking machinery, wood carving, cabinet work, finishing and metal pipe construction, and also included office space. In addition, a brick duplex dwelling had been added to the property southeast of the factory, and storage sheds were built across the railroad tracks. Lumber was stored in several sheds and in a series of five piles which reached a height of eighteen feet; the largest of these piles measured over 150 feet long, providing an index to the volume of organ construction anticipated by the company during this period.

Section <u>8</u> Page <u>3</u>

WA-HAG-179 Möller Organ Works

Six years later, in 1910, the two-story factory building which had been added between 1897 and 1904 had been raised to three-story height, and the courtyard between the two principal factory wings had been infilled with a skylighted erecting room. The building also expanded to the south, to house more woodworking machinery. An aerial perspective view of the complex was published in 1911 (see attached); it generally corresponds to the information provided on the Sanborn Map of the previous year, but also shows a U-shaped lumber shed located south of the factory; only part of this structure is indicated on the 1910 map. At the time, the enterprise was described as follows:

. . . [I]n 1895, the present factory was built and it has since been enlarged five times. The present plant is equipped with the most modern machinery and every appliance found to be advantageous to the work. Möller organs have been placed in thirteen hundred churches, besides a large number of colleges, residences, lodge rooms and other Many of these instruments rank among the institutions. largest organs in America and Möller organs are now in use in every State in the Union, besides several foreign countries. Visitors to Hagerstown are invited to visit this plant where every part used in pipe organs is manufactured, and to inspect parts under construction and materials from which they are made. Every organ is designed and built specifically for the building it is to occupy and here will be found in course of construction pipe organs of all sizes. The Möller systems of Tubular-Pneumatic actions are protected by patents and on account of their simplicity and reliability are said by experts to surpass all others, but organs of this make are best known on account of their fine tone and high grade construction. One department of the factory has recently been devoted to the manufacture of organs for Schools, Colleges, Lodge Rooms, Residences and other purposes apart from church use to meet the large and increasing demand for such organs. The factory employs about 200 skilled workmen, a number of which have been employed there more than twenty years, while others came from other prominent American and European factories. . . . 5

This description went on to list a number of institutions from New York to Michigan and as far south as South Carolina in which Möller organs had recently been installed.

By 1918, a need for still more manufacturing space caused the removal of the duplex residence, making way for a three-story extension of the factory to the southeast. Lumber storage by that time had

Section 8 Page 4

WA-HAG-179 Möller Organ Works

expanded onto the property formerly held by the Roman Catholic Cemetery to the south. The final expansion of the complex took place between 1918 and 1926, when a three-story brick erecting room was constructed across the north end of the then-existing factory, directly opposite West North Street. At the same time, offices and a machine shop were constructed extending from the new erecting room to the north, and two large, one-story frame structures for the fabrication of wood and metal organ pipes were built at the southeast end of the complex, which had by then absorbed the former Roman Catholic Cemetery and extended as far south as West Bethel Street.

About a dozen full-time organ manufacturers were in business at the time of Minnick's profile of the Möller firm. By the early 20th century, the Möller Organ Works became both the largest pipe organ factory in the world and one of the largest employers in Hagerstown, with about 300 hands. In addition to the organ works, the entrepreneurial M. P. Möller owned the Dagmar hotel and produced the Dagmar automobile (both named for his daughter), operated music stores and a taxi service, and had interests in the Hagerstown Trust Company, Home Builders Building and Loan Association, Kinetic Engineering Company, and the W. H. Reisner Manufacturing Company, which produced pipe organ hardware among other products. The factory on North Prospect Street was expanded 14 times before 1925. By 1961, the firm had produced a total of some 9,000 organs over eight decades.

Section 8 Page 5

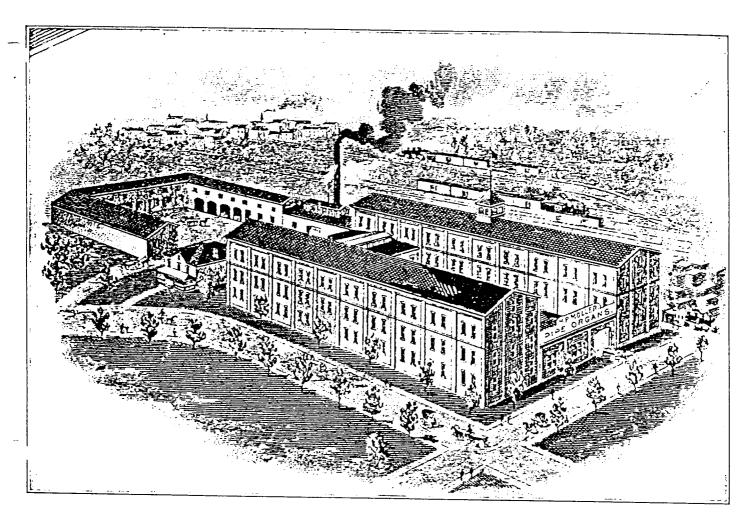
WA-HAG-179 Möller Organ Works

Notes:

- 1. Information on the early history of the Möller Organ Works is drawn from several sources, including company literature; Rosemary Minnick, "M. P. Möller -- Maker of Majestic Instruments," undated ms., vertical files, Western Maryland Room, Washington County Library; J. William Jones, "M. P. Möller Co. Pipes Up the World," Baltimore News-American, April 15, 1973, Sec. F, pp. 1, 8; J. Thomas Scharf, History of Western Maryland. orig. pub. Philadelphia, 1882; rpt. Baltimore: Regional Publishing Co., 1968, p. 1178; and T. J. C. Williams, Hagerstown. An Illustrated Description of the City of Hagerstown, Maryland. Hagerstown: The Mail Publishing Co., 1887, p. 56.
- 2. Scharf, p. 1178.
- 3. T. J. C. Williams, <u>Hagerstown: An Illustrated Description of the City of Hagerstown, Maryland</u>. Hagerstown: The Mail Publishing Co., 1887, p. 56.
- 4. The following discussion of the development of the Möller Organ Works is derived from analysis of maps of Hagerstown produced by the Sanborn Map Company of New York, available at the Library of Congress or on microfilm at the Maryland State Archives, Annapolis.
- 5. Clarence E. Weaver, <u>Story of Hagerstown, Maryland</u>. Hagerstown: Mail Publishing Co., 1911, p. 17.
- 6. Writers Press Association, Advance Press Service, April 20, 1935; copy in vertical file, Western Maryland Room, Washington County Library. Also see Weaver, p. 13.
- 7. Baltimore <u>Sun</u>, April 2, 1961, p. 5.

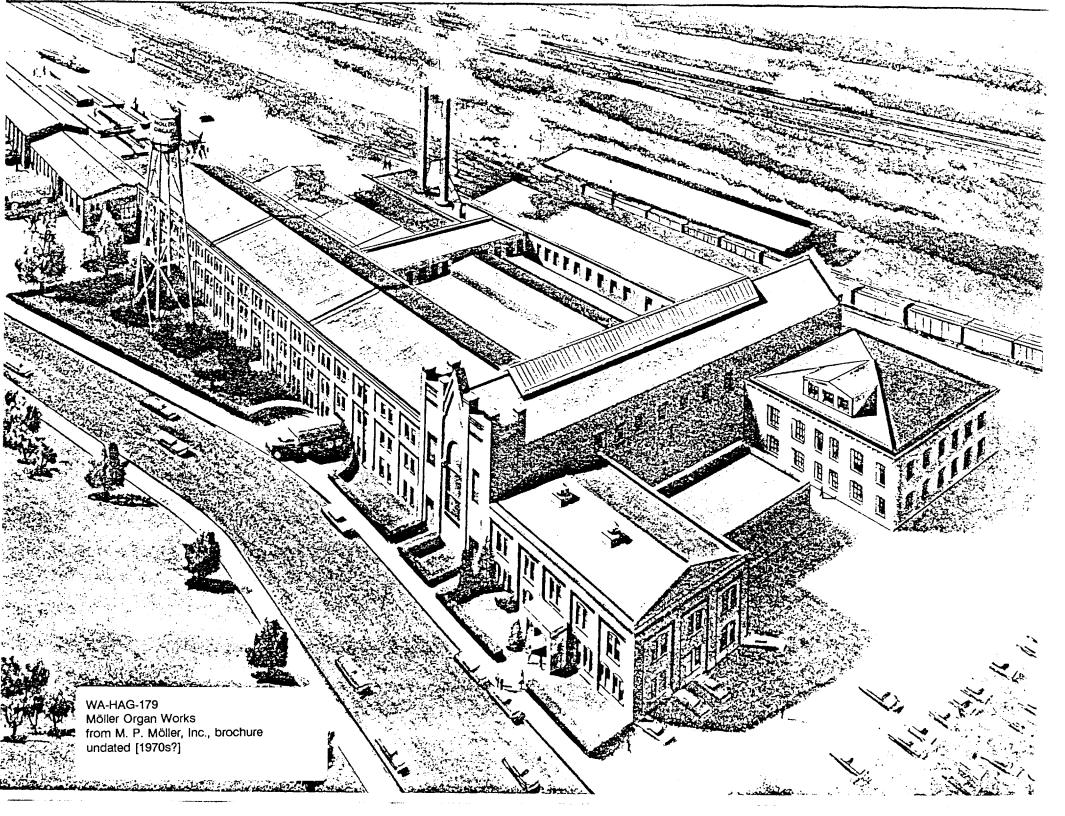
Also see the following sources:

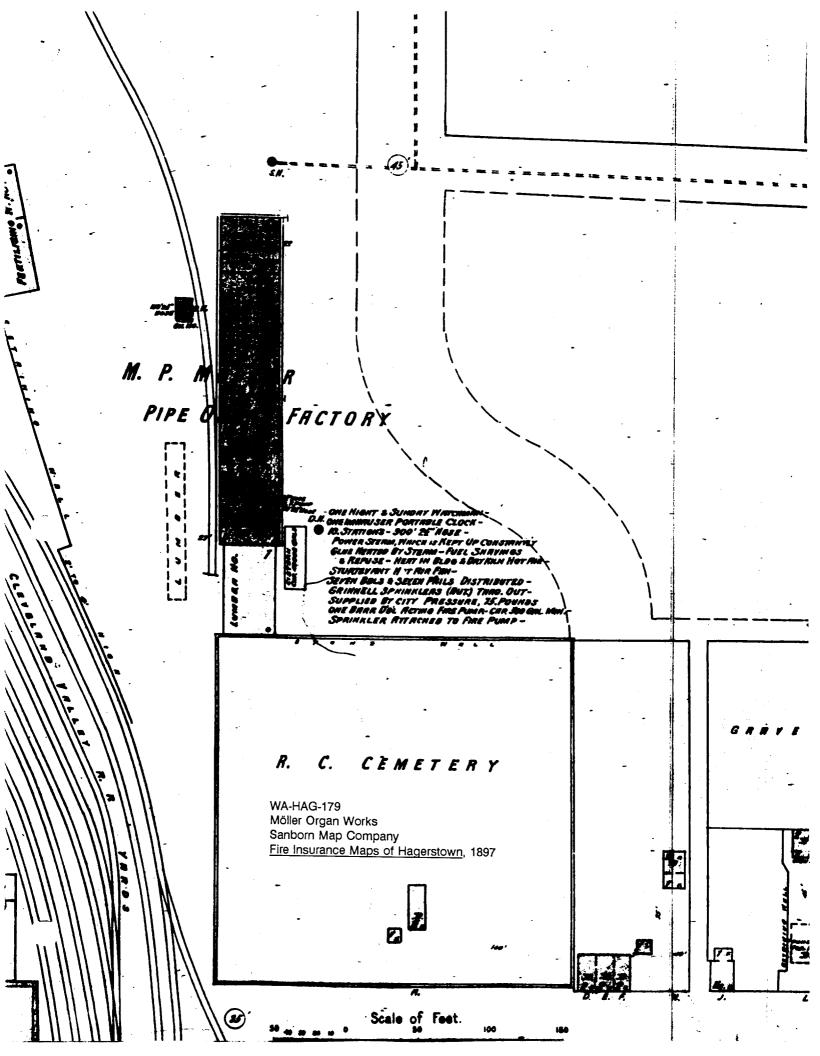
M. P. Möller, Inc. brochures in vertical files, Western Maryland Room, Washington County Library; vertical files, Maryland Room, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore; vertical files, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore.

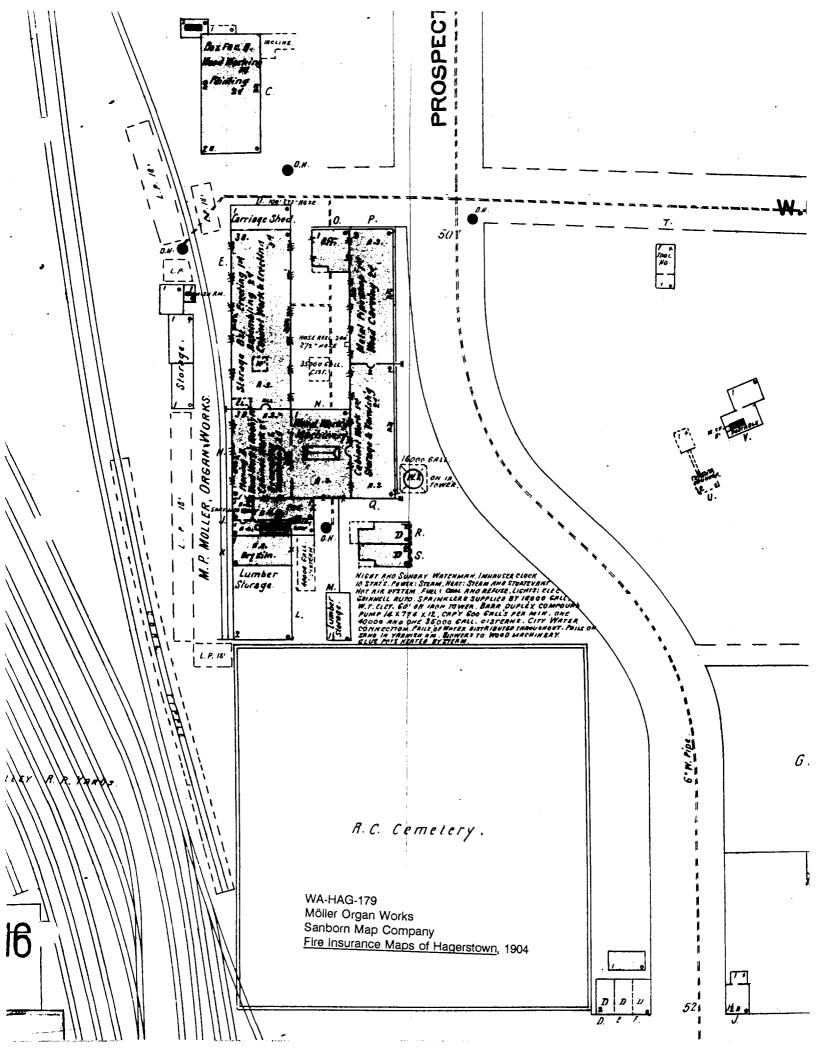


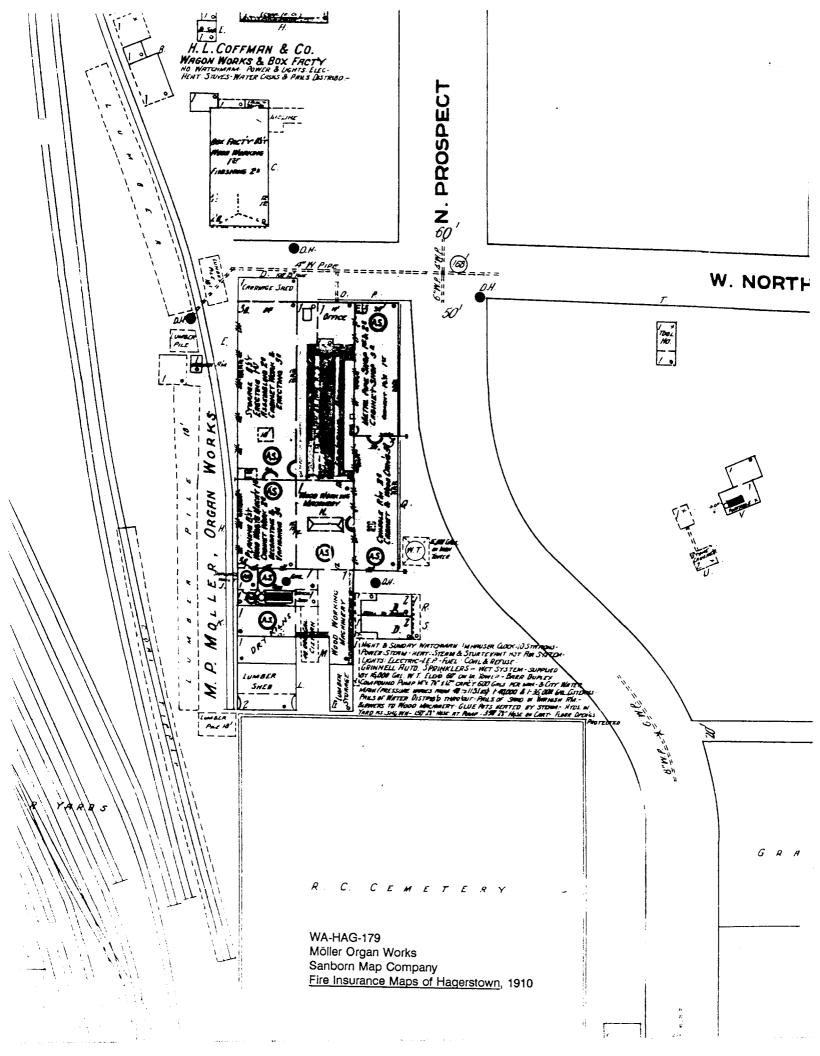
M. P. Moller Pipe Organ Factory.

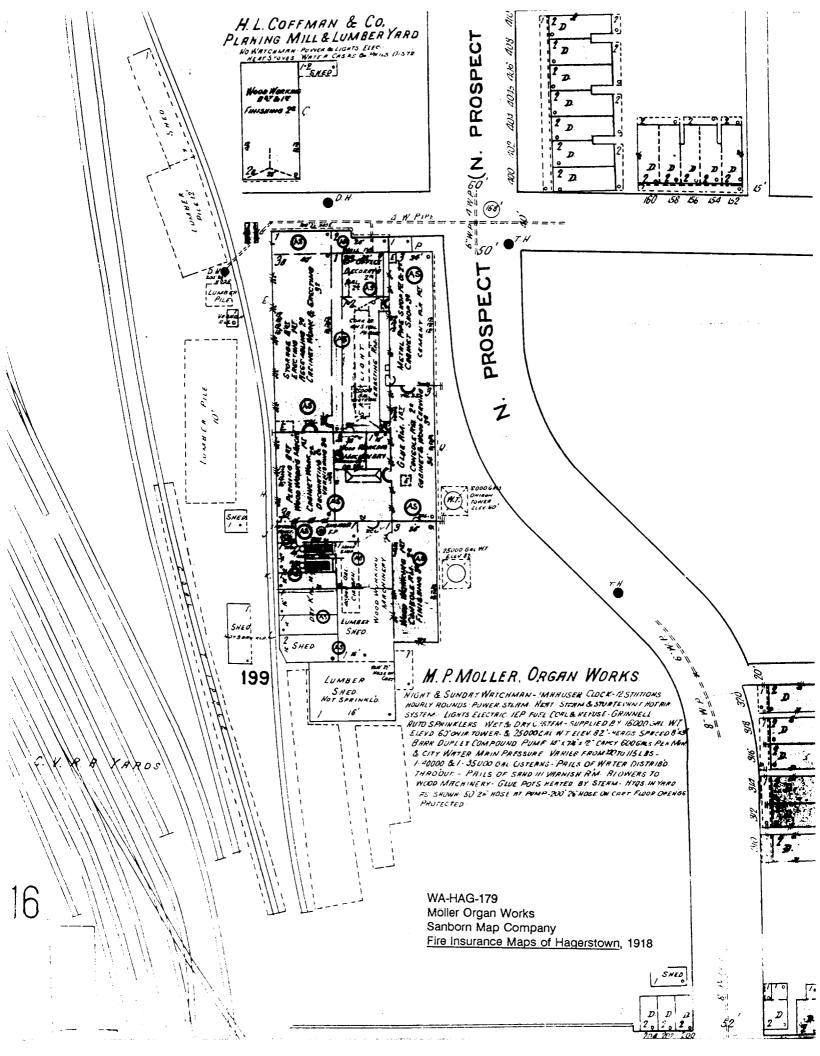
WA-HAG-179 Möller Organ Works, ca. 1911 from Clarence E. Weaver, Story of Hagerstown (1911), p. 17.

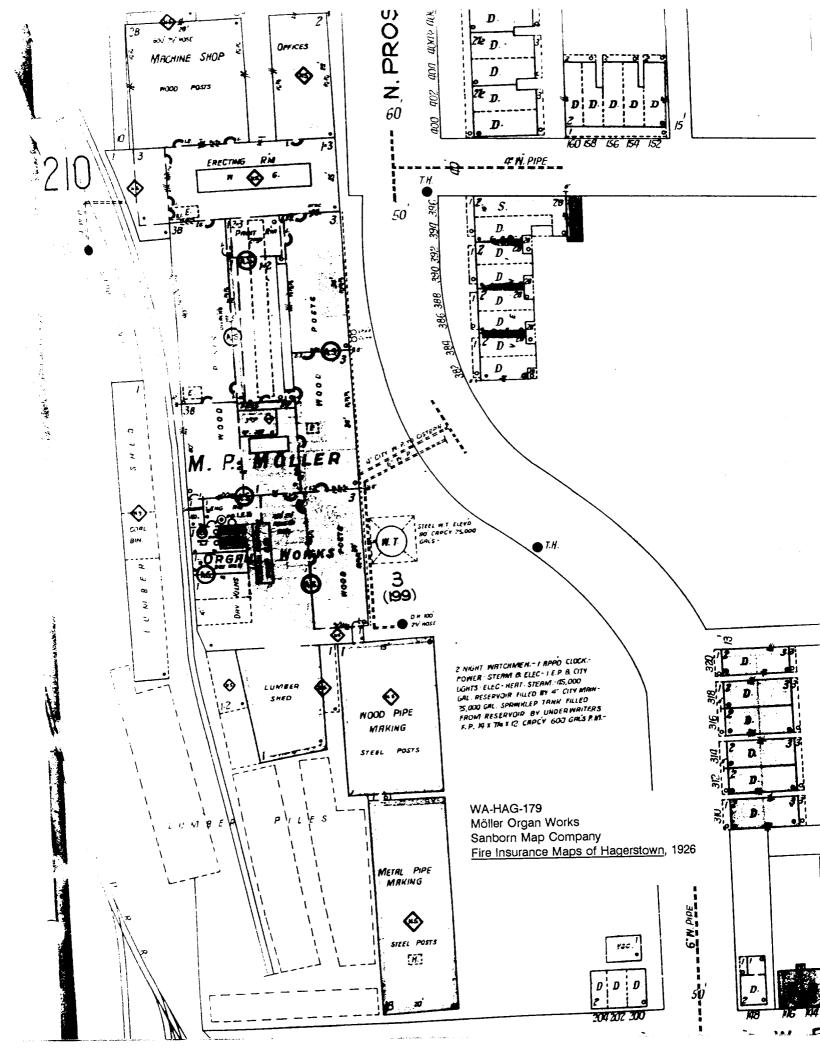


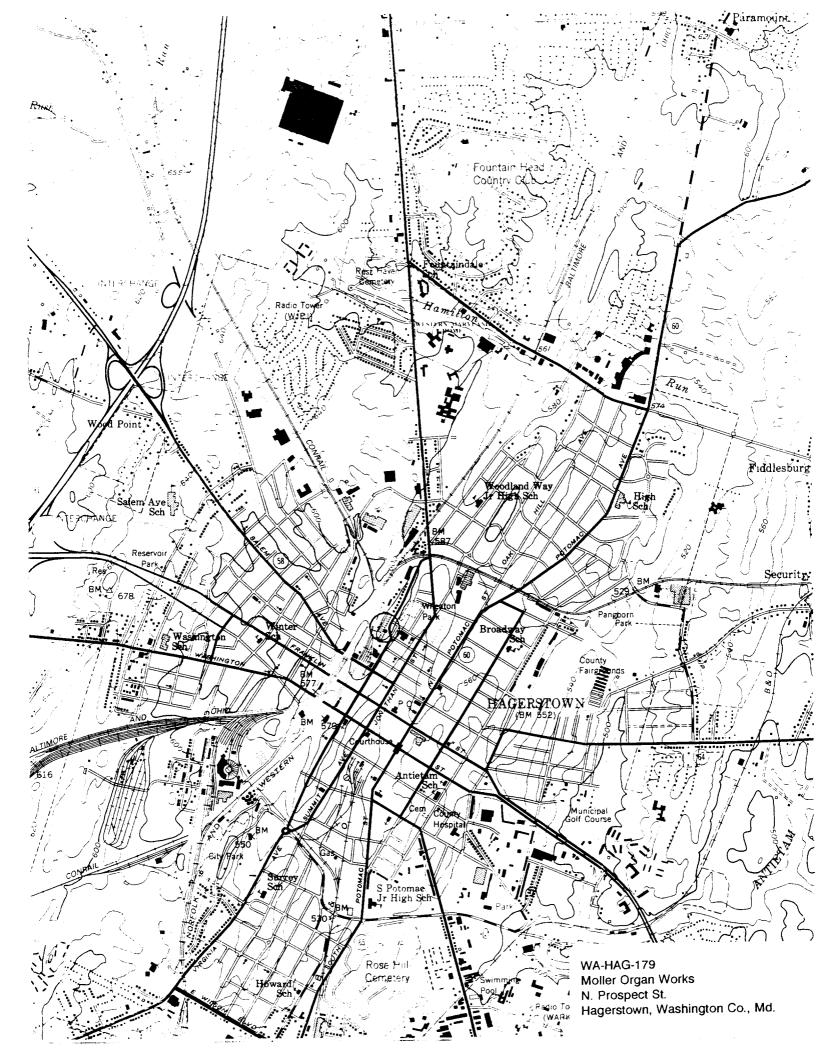














MOLLER ORGAN WORKS
HAGERSTOWN MD
791 P. KURTZE
VIEW FROM EAST